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THE RED FLOWER

A Play of Armenia To-day

BY
HELEN HARRINGTON

INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT OF NORTH AMERICA

SALES DEPARTMENT

45 West 18th Street

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no 1

Persons of the Play

Men

BOGHOS KEULEYAN (Bō-ghōs Kew'-lay-ian), aged about sixty. *A one-time well-to-do merchant now reduced in circumstances on account of the general conditions in his country. He is cheerful and lovable.*

STEPHEN KEULEYAN, his son, aged about twenty-six, handsome and manly. *He has been educated in America.*

GARABED (Gār'-a-bed) }
MANOOG (Mā'-noog) } *friends of Boghos. Matter-of-fact old men.*

MARGOS (Mār-gōs), friend of Boghos. *Rather gentle and dreamy.*

WILLIAM AYER, a young American clergyman attached to the mission. *He is light complexioned, tall, and slight. A fine type of the manly, straightforward, American clergyman of to-day.*

NOORIL (Noor-il'), a begging dervish.

ALI (Ā-lee), a captain under Mustapha Kemal (Mus-ta-pha-Ke-mal).

FOUR YOUNG MEN, wedding guests.

TWO SOLDIERS, accompanying Ali.

Women

MOTHER ARMENIA, a tragic, sad-faced old woman who might once have been tall and handsome, but who now bends under the weight of suffering. *She is meant to stand as a symbol of Armenia.*

SEEMA (See'-mā), a beautiful Armenian girl of nineteen, Stephen's bride.

KUSHTA (Kush'-tā), a pale little girl of from nine to twelve years of age.

FOUR YOUNG GIRLS, wedding guests.

FOUR YOUNG GIRLS, sufferers from famine.

A young man or woman who can play the flute or violin.

In case there is need to reduce the number of players, the wedding guests in the first scene may "double" as the soldiers and sufferers from famine in the last scene. This will make the number of players necessary seventeen. On the other hand, if desired, the number of wedding guests and soldiers may be increased to any number available.

Costumes

BOGHOS KEULEYAN—Dark, American suit with old-fashioned Prince Albert coat. The seams of the trousers may be taken in so as gradually to shape the leg of the trouser down to a tight-fitting angle. He wears white stockings and low black house slippers. He wears no collar, but a black silk handkerchief may be folded about his neck and tucked in under the vest. On his head is worn continually the typical red fez, without the tassel.

STEPHEN KEULEYAN—Ordinary American business suit with Armenian red fez worn continually. His costume for the wedding scene may be rented from the Interchurch World Movement,* or he may appear in a festive Armenian costume of red bloomer-like trousers fitted down to a tight ankle, a red and gold striped overcoat, tight fitting in the body, with a flaring skirt. The sleeves flare at the wrist and are made with the stripe running around the arm. The coat is finished with a small collar, like a shirt band. It is fastened tightly across the breast to the waist, hanging loose from the waist down. He wears a wide soft girdle of black and gold stripes, white stockings, and low black house slippers. The fez on this occasion is ornamented with a roll of blue and gold striped material twisted about the edge.

GARABED, MANOOG, MARGOS—Costumes similar to that worn by Boghos.

WILLIAM AYER—He wears a much-worn khaki uniform, with a heavy sweater instead of a coat.

NOORIL—Dervish costume; large, circular, dirty white cape with monk-like hood attached. The cape hangs to the floor and completely shrouds the figure. The cowl is pulled down over the face. Under this garment are worn ragged dirty, white bloomer-like trousers reaching to ankles, and a ragged white shirt. He is barefooted.

WEDDING GUESTS—Costumes similar to that worn by Stephen at the wedding, only of darker colors, dull striped or flowered chintz being used with bright girdles of contrasting colors. Fezes worn by Armenian men are not tasseled, nor are they ornamented.

ALI and SOLDIERS—Soft felt, pointed shoes; ordinary dark trousers with strips of dark cloth wound soldier spiral-fashion to the knees; large, loose, single-breasted overcoats, and twisted girdles of bright scarfs stuck full of dirk-like knives. If possible, a belt of cartridges across the breast. Fezes of heavy black cloth, large and clumsy in appearance. Long guns are strapped across their backs. They wear large mustachios. Ali's turban is of white cloth.

MOTHER ARMENIA—A plain tight waist of faded dark print over a bifurcated skirt of a brighter color of chintz. A full apron of black cloth tied around the waist, dark striped scarf softly folded around the

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waist as a girdle. A square of black silkoline or silk with a small colored spot, folded three-cornerwise and worn low over the forehead, one end of it being shorter than the other; the long end is wound around the neck under the chin.

SEEMA—An Armenian bridal costume may be rented from the Interchurch World Movement, or the following costume may be worn: a long straight slip, sleeveless, of black material, with a deep border of red and gold. Over this a jacket of red velvet, embroidered with gold, or a long overcoat of red with simulated gold embroidery; a veil, two yards long and three-quarters of a yard wide, of red silkoline with deep bands of gold embroidered on the ends; black stockings; red Turkish slippers. Seema's hair is braided in two braids hanging over her shoulders in front. The hair of the other young women is concealed by their veils.

KUSHTA—Bright red calico dress made in Mother Hubbard style, buttoning in front; kerchief of darker red fastened over her head and hair like a Red Cross veil. She is barefooted.

YOUNG WOMEN—Slips of figured calico, with coats, some of red and cream-colored material, and some of red and cream stripes. Their veils are of figured silkoline and cream-colored silkoline with red borders. They wear white stockings and low slippers. Their hair is concealed by their veils. They wear the same garments, torn and soiled, for the second scene.

Stage Properties

A charcoal brazier such as Armenians use
A number of tapestries and bright-colored shawls
A table
A large, backless, low divan
A low window-seat
One American rocker
Two American chairs
Six cushions
An old-fashioned, plain, kerosene lamp
An earthen bowl for flowers
A bunch of red flowers
A pitcher and drinking cup
A small basin
Some white bandages
Three brass candlesticks and a candle
Two small packages (wedding gifts)
A number of long cigarettes
A rag doll
A part of a loaf of bread
A cabinet or brace of shelves
An old rifle

Note to Stage Director

There is nothing in the construction of this play which would preclude its being given out-of-doors. A note on the program could state the setting and change of scene. In changing the set from the first to the second scene, simply turn out the lights. In case of matinee performance, this may be done in full view of the audience, as is customary in open air playing. In case of out-of-door production, the setting and entrances would be exactly the same as indicated on the diagram for indoor production, except that green shrubs would be used instead of the walls of the room. If a box set is not available, screens will do to form the room. Whatever is used, the color should be neutral because of the brilliancy of hangings and costumes. If the pageant is given out-of-doors at night, the artistic effect will be heightened if the guests carry torches in procession. The effect of shots off stage is produced by striking a piece of leather with a rod. The stroke is light for the first shots in the distance, and becomes heavier as the firing increases.

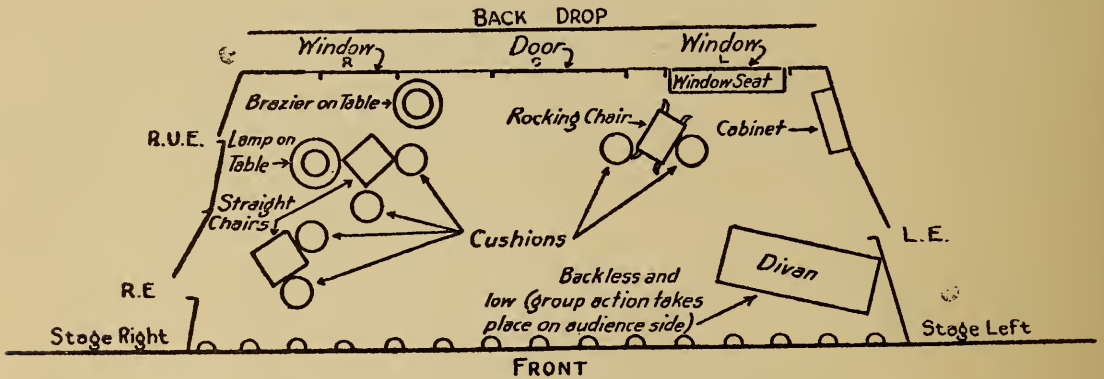


DIAGRAM OF STAGE

STAGE TERMS

C. means *Center*; R., *Right*; L., *Left*; R. C., *Right of Center*; L. C., *Left of Center*; L. E., *Left Entrance*; R. E., *Right Entrance*; R. U. E., *Right Upper Entrance* (back stage).

LEFT and RIGHT mean *left and right of the actor as he faces the audience.*

DOWN STAGE means *down toward the footlights or audience.*

UP STAGE means *up toward the back of the stage.*

THE RED FLOWER

Scene I

Time: The spring of 1920

A living-room in the home of Boghos Keuleyan not far from the village of Aintab. The room is furnished in the Armenian fashion, cushions and richly colored rugs and tapestries on walls and floor. There is a charcoal brazier near R. U. E. but it is not lighted. In strange contrast to this Oriental setting are two straight-backed American chairs placed R. C. and an American rocker toward L. C. There are cushions placed near the chairs. During the scene, chairs and cushions may be moved as the action requires.

There is an entrance at Center Back, at Left, at Right and at Right Upper. The door at Left is supposed to lead to the dining-room and kitchen, the doors at Right and Right Upper are supposed to lead to the sleeping-rooms. Through the windows which are Right and Left of the door at Center, may be seen the back drop which discloses a bit of Armenian scenery, suggesting the outlying part of the village.

It is one of the homes that has not yet been touched by the desolation of the famine, though soon after the curtain rises the spectre begins to make itself felt.

As the curtain rises Boghos Keuleyan is seen entering door C. carrying a bunch of red flowers in his hand.

BOGHOS: Kushta!

KUSHTA: (*From within L.*) Yes, Uncle Boghos.

BOGHOS: Is everything ready for the wedding feast?

KUSHTA: (*Appearing at door L.*) Yes, Uncle, everything is ready. Haven't I been a good girl?

BOGHOS: You have, indeed, my little Kushta. (*He crosses L. and places flowers on the window-seat.*)

KUSHTA: You did not wait for the others?

BOGHOS: No, I hurried away from the church to help you set the table. Is the soup-bowl there in its place?

KUSHTA: Yes, and all the spoons.

BOGHOS: That is well.

KUSHTA: (*Coming toward C.*) Will not Stephen and Seema be surprised when they come in and find such a beautiful feast?

BOGHOS: They will indeed.

KUSHTA: Uncle Boghos—

BOGHOS: (*Who has started to cross toward door L. but stops and turns as Kushta speaks*) Yes?

KUSHTA: Uncle Boghos, why were Stephen and Seema married in the night-time like this?

BOGHOS: (*Showing that there is a reason which he does not wish to explain to the child*) You ask too many questions, child.

KUSHTA: Please, Uncle Boghos, why? Everybody gets married in the daytime—in the bright sunlight. Besides, the wedding day was set for to-morrow.

BOGHOS: (*Partly explaining, yet showing by his manner that he is not revealing all*) In the distant province where Seema's people lived before they moved to this village, it was the ancient custom to marry at midnight.

KUSHTA: And Seema has remembered about it all these years, even though she has lived at the American Mission ever since her father and mother died?

BOGHOS: Yes, she remembered. At the mission they taught her to love America, but they did not teach her to love her own country less.

KUSHTA: Stephen, too, loves his country even though he has been to college in America. But see, Uncle, (*Kushta goes to the door L. and throws it open.*) there! Isn't that beautiful?

BOGHOS: (*Looking in and being extravagant in his expression to show his appreciation of Kushta's effort*) Just like a banquet in a fairy tale!

KUSHTA: (*Suddenly realizing that something is missing*) Oh, but there are no flowers. I was afraid to go out by the roadside to gather them. The Turkish soldiers are everywhere.

BOGHOS: (*Lowering his voice*) And you have need to be cautious. No Christian girl is safe in our streets to-day. But see, I have kept these in water all day. (*He crosses to the window-seat and lifts up the large bunch of red flowers.*)

KUSHTA: (*Delightedly*) The Fountain's Blood! In blossom so soon?

BOGHOS: The spring is early this year. Bring me that earthen jar, child. (*His hands being filled with the flowers, Kushta runs to the shelves and, from the lower one, takes an earthen jar and comes back to C.*)

KUSHTA: Here it is, Uncle.

They sit on the floor and talk as they arrange the flowers, separating the withered stalks from those that have survived.

BOGHOS: Thank you, little one. The mountain-side is red with them.

KUSHTA: They are so beautiful. Oh, see this one. (*Lifting a particularly fine blossom up above her head*)

BOGHOS: Have I ever told you, Kushta, what I have often thought about these flowers?

KUSHTA: No, Uncle.

BOGHOS: See how red they are?

KUSHTA: Like blood!

BOGHOS: (*With a suggestion of tragedy in his voice*) Like blood! And I have often thought that they take their color from the blood of massacred Armenians.

KUSHTA: Oh, Uncle!

BOGHOS: Yes, my child. There is hardly a foot of ground in Armenia that has not at one time or another been soaked with Christian blood.

KUSHTA: And that is why these flowers are red?

BOGHOS: (*Bringing himself back from the half-revery in which he has been speaking*) That is only my fancy, Kushta.

KUSHTA: But you have grown so sad.

BOGHOS: It is not when the flower is red that I grow sad. When the blood flows, death comes quickly. It is when I see it withering and drying and dying by the roadside, like this. (*He picks up the withered stalks that have been laid aside.*) It is then that I feel the deepest anguish for my stricken country. (*The face of Kushta saddens, and she is beginning to cry.*) There, there, child, we are forgetting about the wedding feast. (*He picks up the withered stalks and lays them again on the window-seat. Kushta buries her face in the flowers and caresses them. Boghos returns to C. and gently lifting the earthen jar, places it on table R. C.*) Is there anything for a salad?

KUSHTA: (*Rising*) Marta says she has a few greens that she found at the end of the garden. She says it might do if there was another egg to spread over the top of it.

BOGHOS: (*Importantly*) Did you not hear the speckled hen cackle to-day?

KUSHTA: No, Uncle. Why did I not hear her cackle?

BOGHOS: (*With a touch of shrewdness*) Because I keep the hen-house muffled. I cover it with straw and weeds.

KUSHTA: Why do you do that?

BOGHOS: When an egg arrives, it is not well to advertise the fact too loudly. They are great braggers, those hens.

KUSHTA: Now we have two eggs for the top of the salad!

BOGHOS: (*With a little twinkle in his eye*) Tell Marta to boil them very hard and chop them very fine. Then, if they are sprinkled over the top of the salad with great care, it will look like *more* than two eggs.

KUSHTA: Yes, Uncle. (*She turns and looks ruefully at the brazier.*)
Shall I light the charcoal, Uncle Boghos? I know how.

BOGHOS: No. There will be no need of it. There is no coffee. But that does not matter. (*Kushta exits L. to dining-room. There is a knock on the door C. Three patriarchal figures enter. They are Garabed, Margos, and Manoog, neighbors and "cronies" of Boghos. They each carry a parcel.*) Good evening, good evening, neighbors, you are welcome.
They salute each other after the manner of Armenians, by bringing the hand upward to the forehead, with a scooping outward curving movement.

GARABED: Good evening, Boghos.

BOGHOS: (*Genially*) Well, well, I am glad to see you.

MANOOG: Good evening. (*Handing the package to Boghos*) I have brought a little gift for Seema from my wife.

BOGHOS: (*Taking the package*) You are very kind.

MANOOG: It is some barley flour.

BOGHOS: That is a good gift nowadays.

MARGOS: (*Coming a little forward toward Boghos, who is slightly C.*) I could not give you anything so precious. Our barley flour is all gone. But here are my grandfather's brass candlesticks. We have no one now to pass them on to, so they are to be Seema's.

GARABED: (*Handing Boghos a package*) And here is the shawl that was to have been Araxi's wedding gift.

BOGHOS: Thank you, thank you. (*He crosses to L. U., places the packages on the window-seat and is busying himself finding a place for the candlesticks on the shelves. He speaks as he does so.*) You are very kind. Make yourselves comfortable. (*While he is busy there, Garabed, Margos, and Manoog look around for a place to sit down, and the most prominent things confronting them are the three American chairs. They walk around them observing them curiously, then stand undecidedly stroking their beards. Boghos turns, and observing them, begins a smile that finally ends in a chuckle.*) Do you not like these American chairs?

MANOOG: Oh yes, they are very nice—but they look uncomfortable. Where did you get them?

BOGHOS: My son Stephen sent them from America when he was there at college.

MARGOS: I have not seen them before.

BOGHOS: They have been in his room. I brought them in for the wedding. Try them.

Manoog goes rather cautiously to the straight-backed chair R. of C. and finding it bears his weight, decides to sit on it.

MANOOG: It is not so bad—but it makes me feel a little flighty.

MARGOS: (*Sitting in the other chair R. of C. and pretending to be unconcerned, though it is plain that he is not any too comfortable. Boghos suppresses a sly chuckle.*) I find it is very comfortable indeed.

GARABED: (*Going to the rocker L. of C. and sitting in it cautiously.*) Stephen loves everything American, doesn't he?

MANOOG: I shall never forget his letters from Northfield. How we always enjoyed them. (*He slides down from his chair on to a cushion toward C.*)

MARGOS: (*Also sliding down from his chair*) It must be wonderful to be young, and to go to strange lands. But it is harder, as you get older, to change your habits.

GARABED: (*Who has been rocking gently, tips a bit too far back and gives up the rocker, sliding down on to the cushion nearest C., while the others slyly enjoy his loss of dignity.*) America is a great country, but I don't like her chairs. Give me a cushion! It is steadier.

KUSHTA: (*At door L.*) Oh, Uncle Boghos! (*She sees the guests and shyly bows to them.*)

BOGHOS: Well, what is it?

KUSHTA: I forgot to tell you. Mr. Ayer was here while you were out.

BOGHOS: Oh, I'm glad of that. Will he be back?

KUSHTA: Yes, he said he'd be back. He's going to bring me a dolly. (*To Kushta's joy, Manoog, Margos, and Garabed utter exclamations of astonished delight at this news.*)

BOGHOS: Does Stephen know that Mr. Ayer is in Aintab?

KUSHTA: No. He wants to surprise him. (*She exits at door L.*)

BOGHOS: Mr. Ayer is a young clergyman who has come to join the American Mission here. He and my son were classmates at Mt. Hermon.

GARABED: What news does he bring from America?

BOGHOS: The missionaries there are working hard. The Near East Relief is straining every nerve. But—ah, well—

GARABED: But what?

BOGHOS: But America is not fully awakened. They cannot realize the horror here.

MANOOG: Well, how can we blame them? Until you see such things with your own eyes you cannot believe them to be true.

GARABED: What is to become of us?

BOGHOS: But the Americans who are here, and who know—how they are working!

As the men talk, they light their long cigarettes which Boghos passes around. Their speech is serious, tinged with a certain hopelessness. Boghos goes to divan, sitting at end nearest C.

GARABED: We are fortunate in getting Mr. Ayer here. How did he happen to choose Aintab?

BOGHOS: The ways of God are strange. Stephen and he knew each other first at Mt. Hermon. After leaving college they did not meet again until—one night they found each other on a battlefield in France.

MARGOS: Well, well, how remarkable!

BOGHOS: Young Ayer was wounded—bleeding to death. My boy found him, carried him to his dug-out, and saved his life.

MARGOS: Well, well, well! And now they are in Armenia together!

BOGHOS: Yes. Mr. Ayer went back to America when the war was over, but he heard the cry of Armenia and came here. He is a noble lad.

MANOOG: And Stephen hasn't seen him yet?

BOGHOS: No, Stephen has been away, at Harpoot. This will be a great surprise for him. Stephen and he will work out much good together.

MARGOS: We old ones can only go on dreaming. It is the young men who have the vision and the power to do.

BOGHOS: There may still be work for you, Garabed,—for us. (*Looking at the three. There is much meaning in his voice. All the men look at him, expecting him to say more. The door R. opens and Mother Armenia enters.*) Hush-sh-sh. (*Mother Armenia passes slowly from Right to Left. She carries a candlestick without a candle in her hand. The men continue to smoke, and as she passes to Left they speak in somewhat lowered tones.*) Poor Mother Armenia! Her span of life is nearly run.

Mother Armenia exits L.

MANOOG: Her step grows slower each day.

MARGOS: And yet, even to-day I saw her in the village bringing bits of food to the starving children.

BOGHOS: To me she stands as a symbol of our poor country itself—Armenia.

MANOOG: I shall never forget that terrible night when we found them, little Kushta and Mother Armenia, starving by the roadside.

GARABED: That was before I came here. I don't think I have ever heard who she is.

BOGHOS: When the Turks drove the Armenians on that terrible march through the desert, she was one of those who fell behind, too weak to go farther. We found her on the side of the road. She could not remember her name so we called her Mother Armenia. Little Kushta was lying near her.

GARABED: The village folk say she is demented.

BOGHOS: Sometimes she seems so, and sometimes she seems inspired. Her mind wanders and she becomes vague, and then again she will utter the most wonderful truths. For the most part she says little, but just croons the old, sad songs of Armenia.

GARABED: Must we go on enduring forever?

MARGOS: Boghos, what did you mean just now when you said that there might still be work for us old men to do?

BOGHOS: (*First goes toward door L. to make sure that Mother Armenia will not hear.*) A courier from Beirut brings bad news to-day. (*The moment is dramatic. The men search the face of Boghos eagerly.*)

GARABED: What does he say?

BOGHOS: That there will soon be more massacres.

MARGOS: How can there be? The Sultan fears America and will not dare to order further slaughter.

BOGHOS: He may not order it himself, but if without his consent there should be another massacre,—well, there will be still fewer Christians left in his path.

MARGOS: Whom have we to fear?

BOGHOS: Mustapha Kemal.

MARGOS: Mustapha Kemal? What power has he?

BOGHOS: The unwritten consent of the Sultan.

MANOOG: Of course. It's plain enough.

BOGHOS: It's the same old story! He tricks the great nations into trusting him—and then goes right on with his bloody work.

MANOOG: Planning for the death of more Christians, while all over Armenia there rises the stench of bodies still unburied!

GARABED: Those who have gone mad from hunger are cooking and eating the bodies of those already dead from starvation.

MANOOG: And fathers and mothers are killing themselves, so that as orphans their children may be fed.

MARGOS: Blackness, blackness everywhere!

GARABED: Boghos, do you know that there has been much criticism in the village about your giving this wedding feast to-night?

BOGHOS: (*With dignity*) What are they saying?

GARABED: That it doesn't look well, with famine all around, for you to set forth such a feast.

BOGHOS: (*Standing majestically in their midst*) Neighbors, should any hungry eyes look in through my window to-night, they will gaze upon a phantom feast!

GARABED: What do you mean?

BOGHOS: There is no food in the house. Not enough for one man's dinner.

MANOOG: Then why did you invite all those young people here?

BOGHOS: To keep their spirits up for a little while longer. When the smile has faded from the face of the young, then indeed will our country's heart be broken.

MARGOS: That smile is nearly gone now.

BOGHOS: They will gather here to-night dressed in their gay clothes, but the spectre of death hangs over every one of them.

GARABED: But why did you have the marriage at midnight? That, too, is causing comment. The date was set for to-morrow.

BOGHOS: (*In a voice which fills the others with hushed awe*) Because—if what I have heard to-day is true, God only knows what may happen in this village before to-morrow. (*The men rise to their feet.*)

MANOOG: We must be prepared. We must return to our homes.

BOGHOS: Yes, go home now—but do not sleep to-night!

As they go out, each one making the customary salutation, Mother Armenia crosses back from L. to R. carrying the candlestick which now has a lighted candle in it. As Boghos turns again after closing the door, singing is heard (see page 36), accompanied by tambourines, flutes, and drums (a violin and cornet would also be in character). A procession of young people in gay Armenian costumes enters. Four young men and four young women lead in the bride and groom. The bride keeps her veil down. Boghos salutes each guest by bowing deeply, sweeping the hand up to the forehead with the movement already described, as he bids each guest welcome.

YOUNG GUEST: Good evening, Father Boghos.

ANOTHER GUEST: (*Laughing*) Or is it morning?

There is general laughing and talking.

THIRD GUEST: (*As bride and groom are led to seats on the divan.*) Let us wish the bride and groom a glad new day.

BOGHOS: (*Genially*) Come, let us have the rest of the song I heard outside. Who was playing for you?

ALL: Antranig! Antranig! (*If a young woman, the name given may be Marie.*)

The flute or violin player steps forward and all the company join in finishing the song which was begun outside. As the song ends, Boghos and the bride and groom applaud heartily.

BOGHOS: Come, I have a fine banquet prepared. You are all invited.

ALL: (*Catching his spirit of pretended gaiety*) A banquet, a banquet! How wonderful! How very wonderful! (*These speeches may be divided up among the different characters, so as to give the effect of a general murmur of conversation as the young people exeunt into the dining-room L. As their voices die down, Mother Armenia from within R. is heard crooning this sad old song, and the effect must come out in strong contrast to the gaiety of the young people.*)

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Singing, from within R. See page 38.*)

Savage sea make answer! Why be silent more?
Wilt not lament with one whose heart is sore?
And you, ye Zephyrs, hurl the waters high
That I may feed them from a mourner's eye.

Boghos stands in the center of the room listening partly to the murmur of the voices of the young people and partly to the song of Mother Armenia. Finally he crumples, goes to the divan, and bowing his head in his hands, sobs.

BOGHOS: Only a few more days, perhaps, and some of them will be dead from starvation. Day and night I see nothing before me but the eyes, the sad, hopeless eyes of the starving children by the roadside. (*In anguish*) Oh, Armenia, my country, the whole world has forgotten you! (*There is a knock at the door. Boghos pulls himself together and goes to the door. William Ayer, the young American missionary, enters.*) Mr. Ayer, you are most welcome. Is there any news?

WILLIAM: Yes, I have some good news.

BOGHOS: There will be food soon?

WILLIAM: A shipment of food from America has reached Beirut.

BOGHOS: Thank God! How can we ever tell you how grateful we are.

WILLIAM: That is not necessary, we know it. If you only knew how we wish we could do more!

BOGHOS: Will the provisions soon be brought from Beirut?

WILLIAM: They should be here in a few days—unless—

BOGHOS: (*Apprehensively*) Unless what?

WILLIAM: Unless they are intercepted by Mustapha Kemal's men.

BOGHOS: And about to-night—do you think they will carry out their plan?

WILLIAM: (*Walks a few paces to R. and then turns toward Boghos. His manner is very serious.*) Things look threatening. We are in great danger. I came especially to tell you this.

The door opens L. and Kushta puts her head in.

KUSHTA: (*Playfully to William*) Peek!

WILLIAM: (*His face lights up at sight of the child.*) You little rogue! (*Kushta comes running out, and as William takes her hands she swings back and forth, holding on to his hands*) What do you suppose I have for you?

KUSHTA: A doll!

WILLIAM: How did you guess it?

KUSHTA: Because you promised it, and you never break your promise!

William produces from his pocket a bland-looking rag doll, and gives it to Kushta who hugs it.

WILLIAM: What shall we call her?

KUSHTA: Call her after me—Kushta.

WILLIAM: Where did you ever get that funny name?

KUSHTA: I don't know.

BOGHOS: It was all we could make out of the name she gave us when she came to us. Whatever her name was, she could not pronounce it, so Kushta she will always be.

KUSHTA: (*Referring to the doll*) Isn't she beautiful!

WILLIAM: (*Eying the doll critically*) Well, I'd hardly call her beautiful, but she looks dependable. (*They all laugh.*)

BOGHOS: (*To Kushta*) Run in and show it to Stephen, and tell him there is some one out here who wishes to see him.

KUSHTA: All right. (*She runs L. and exits.*)

WILLIAM: How much does Stephen know of the situation here?

BOGHOS: I have not told him of the rumors we have heard to-day.

WILLIAM: It is just as well; they might not be true. But, Ali, this Captain of Mustapha Kemal's, is acting very suspiciously.

BOGHOS: Ali? Once that man followed Seema to our very door. (*Thoughtfully*) It is well that we hastened this marriage.

WILLIAM: (*Pacing about*) There is no need to spoil Stephen's happiness to-night. Our people have taken every possible precaution.

Kushta enters, dragging Stephen by the hand. She runs a few steps toward center with Stephen, and, as the two young men see each other, she runs off R. and exits.

STEPHEN : (*Delighted and surprised*) Well, well, well, upon my word!

Boghos goes out door L.

WILLIAM : Hello, Steve, old boy.

STEPHEN : Well, well, you old scout! Who ever expected to see *you* in Armenia!

WILLIAM : Who ever expected to see *you* rigged up like this? I'm surprised at you.

STEPHEN : (*Posing*) How do you like me?

WILLIAM : You're a beauty.

STEPHEN : Some togs, don't you think?

WILLIAM : What would the fellows we knew at Mt. Hermon say if they could see you now?

STEPHEN : (*Laughing*) Wouldn't they have a fit, eh?

WILLIAM : Where's that old red sweater you used to wear with Mt. Hermon written across it?

STEPHEN : (*With sentiment*) It's folded away with all my American souvenirs.

WILLIAM : (*Sobering down*) Well, after all, it's your old traditions and ceremonies that give your land its flavor.

STEPHEN : Come over here and sit down. (*Indicating the rocker while he himself takes a chair.*)

WILLIAM : (*As he walks toward rocker*) You are sure this is not a rude interruption at this moment?

STEPHEN : Oh, no, my guests will understand; they will excuse me. When did you come?

They both sit down in comfortable American fashion, one with his legs crossed, the other leaning forward, his hands clasped, resting his forearms on his knees.

WILLIAM : I have been here a month.

STEPHEN : I got back from Harpoot yesterday, but they did not tell me you were here.

WILLIAM : I asked them not to; I wanted to take you by surprise.

STEPHEN : Well, you've done it all right. It seems mighty good to see you. Where have you been since I saw you last?

WILLIAM : After the armistice I went back to America for my ordination. I did some work over there with the Near East Relief, and then I realized that I was needed over here.

STEPHEN : How it brings back the old days at Northfield to see you again!

WILLIAM : And seeing you brings back the days in France—when you kept me alive till help came.

STEPHEN: (*Waving the idea aside*) Oh cut that! It was nothing. You'd have done the same for me. I'm thinking of Northfield. Do you remember the old sunset tree and that view of the valley with the Connecticut River flowing through it?

WILLIAM: (*Catching Stephen's spirit*) Yes, and the old white house where Moody lived.

STEPHEN: Moody! There was a great American, William.

WILLIAM: Yes. I wish that America to-day had fewer politicians and more Moodys. (*His look becomes serious.*)

STEPHEN: Why do you look so serious?

WILLIAM: I am thinking about the mandate.

STEPHEN: You think America will refuse it?

WILLIAM: I am afraid so.

STEPHEN: I am sure she will take it over. The heart of America never fails.

WILLIAM: But the head—the politicians get confused.

STEPHEN: William, the whole civilized world has looked on and seen Armenia butchered—

WILLIAM: It seems unbelievable!

STEPHEN:—for century after century, and no one has protested.

WILLIAM: It is beyond belief!

STEPHEN: That's just it, William, it *is* beyond belief. Had the thing been less horrible, the mind of the civilized world might have grasped it.

WILLIAM: The world was comfortable, Steve, and there are none so hard-hearted as the comfortable.

STEPHEN: (*Fired with love for his country*) And what a land it is! It is here the great, mysterious Spirit back of all things first forged its way through into human life.

WILLIAM: Yes, yours is the land of the Garden of Eden, of Mount Ararat, Bethlehem, the Mount of Olives, Gethsemane! But Steve, your land belongs to us, too—to all Christians. It makes us realize that we are all one life, one blood, one brotherhood all over the world.

STEPHEN: And yet, through all the centuries, while Armenia has bled to hold the faith of the One who taught that doctrine, the Christian world has looked on—and let us bleed.

WILLIAM: I know it. I used to read in the papers as part of my morning news, "Another Armenian Massacre," and even I went right on about my own affairs—think of it—and did nothing. (*He bows his head in his hands. After a moment he lifts his head.*) That night near Chateau Thierry, when I was bleeding to death, and you, in spite of

your own wound, crawled out to me where I was lying helpless under the sky—then I realized—and it all came over me as a sort of a revelation, how men must help each other.

There is a fumbling noise and a low moaning and scrambling at the door C. Stephen opens the door, and there enters Nooril, a dirty, half-naked creature. He is a begging dervish, who comes in limping pitifully.

NOORIL: Water! Water! (*He looks wildly around.*) No, no, this is the home of Christian dogs! (*He starts to go out, but falls and is unable to rise. The two young men lift him gently and place him on the divan. Stephen picks up a cushion from the floor and puts it under his head. Nooril becomes unconscious. William observes that his foot is bleeding.*)

WILLIAM: His foot is bleeding.

STEPHEN: Seema has learned nursing at the American mission. She will know just what to do. (*He goes to the door L. and calls.*) Seema! (*He speaks in a low voice as though explaining.*)

WILLIAM: (*As Stephen comes back to the divan*) That's a pretty bad-looking foot.

NOORIL: (*Moaning and unconscious*) They are Christian dogs!

WILLIAM: These poor fanatical fellows, how they have been taught to hate us.

STEPHEN: (*Adjusting the cushion under Nooril's head*) And yet, do you know, William, I have many friends among the Mohammedans. When things are normal, and the religious hatred is not stirred, they are fine fellows, many of them.

WILLIAM: Of course they are. I have found that out, too.

STEPHEN: But their teaching is to hate—hate—hate! Their one desire is to exterminate all Christians, and when the word is given them, they rise *en masse*. (*Seema appears at the door L. She carries a cup and pitcher of water. Her veil is still over her face. Stephen meets her, taking the cup from her hand.*) It will be all right to throw back your veil here. (*He throws the veil back.*) William, this is my wife. Seema, this is Mr. Ayer. You've heard me speak of him often.

SEEMA: (*Bowing, but not extending her hand*) Indeed I have. I am glad to meet you. (*She turns and sees Nooril.*) Oh, it is Nooril! Poor Nooril; what has happened to him?

STEPHEN: You know him?

SEEMA: Yes, I know him well. He used to bring me lokooms when I was little. Oh, his foot is bleeding! I must get some bandages. (*She exits R.*)

Stephen lifts Nooril's head and places the cup of water to his lips. William places the injured foot in a more comfortable position, as Stephen supports his head.

WILLIAM: (*As Nooril tightens his lips, suppressing a groan*) There, there, just a moment. It won't hurt.

STEPHEN: What was it that happened to you, Nooril?

NOORIL: (*Opening his eyes*) I was standing on the cliff, and a stray bullet struck my foot.

WILLIAM: A stray bullet?

STEPHEN: Who is using a gun?

NOORIL: I do not know. It was a stray bullet and it struck me. (*He closes his eyes again.*)

STEPHEN: Those first stray bullets are like the drops of rain that precede a heavy shower. There's something ominous about this.

Seema reenters from R. with bandages. She is followed by Mother Armenia, who carries an earthen basin. Stephen pours water from the pitcher into the basin, Mother Armenia holds the basin, while Seema deftly bathes and bandages the wound, William assisting, and Stephen holding Nooril against his shoulder. This is a very important picture, as it expresses the spirit of Christianity.

SEEMA: (*As she works*) Poor Nooril! (*The dervish winces*) There, Nooril, I won't hurt you—just a moment—there!

NOORIL: (*Looks around and opens his eyes wildly. Pushing the others aside, he rises.*) I am in the house of Christian dogs!

WILLIAM: We are trying to help you—as our Master would have us do.

NOORIL: There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet!

WILLIAM: Well, we won't argue about that now. What you need is some food. (*He takes from his pocket a morsel of bread. To Stephen*) I brought this along thinking I might give it to some one on the way. This man seems to need it most just now.

STEPHEN: Yes, he's pretty weak.

WILLIAM: Here, Nooril—this will do you good.

NOORIL: I'll eat no Christian bread.

STEPHEN: You'd better take it.

NOORIL: No, no.

SEEMA: (*Taking the bread from William's hand*) Nooril, won't you take it from me? From Seema? See, it is wrapped in paper. We have not touched it with our hands.

A softened look comes into the face of the dervish; he turns toward William and Stephen.

NOORIL: I have known her since she was so high. (*Indicating the height of a little girl*) Before these troublous times came she used to romp and play with me.

SEEMA: Just think of it, and I was a terrible Christian!

NOORIL: (*To Stephen*) Your father never passed me without a kind word—and Margos—he, too, has been good to me.

SEEMA: And still you hate us. Why do you hate us, Nooril?

NOORIL: (*His face darkening again*) Because you are Christians. There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet! (*He goes limping out.*)

STEPHEN: That is the burden of their creed. While they had the power of government, it was their religion to stamp us out.

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Rising and taking the basin, bandages, water, near entrance R.*) They killed my only son. (*She exits R.*)

SEEMA: (*After a moment of deep sympathy for Mother Armenia, which is expressed by the silence of all on the stage*) I must return to our guests.

STEPHEN: I shall be in presently.

Seema bows to Mr. Ayer, and exits into room L. When she is gone, William comes to Stephen and speaks seriously.

WILLIAM: As soon as daylight comes, send the women to the Mission. They will be safer there.

STEPHEN: It is almost daylight now.

WILLIAM: Don't alarm the guests, tell one or two of the young men, instead of taking the young girls home, to lead them straight to the mission.

STEPHEN: Yes. The siege is on, or how would that dervish have got that random shot. Armenians have no guns.

WILLIAM: I'll hurry on ahead.

The two young men shake hands, and William goes out Center door. Stephen exits L. and returns almost immediately accompanied by the wedding party. He is seen speaking in a low voice to one or two of the young men, who become suddenly grave. Stephen then joins Seema and Boghos who have moved to the door, and are saying good-bye to their guests, Seema kissing the hand of each guest. After they have gone, Boghos exits R. U. and the bride and groom are left alone. Stephen kisses Seema's fingers with reverence, and leads her to the divan.

SEEMA: I am so happy, Stephen.

STEPHEN: And so am I, dear.

SEEMA: But should we—should we be so happy when our country is so sad?

STEPHEN: We can help our country more by being happy than by being sad. Besides, help is coming from America.

SEEMA: How I love America!

STEPHEN: Some day, when we get rich, I'll take you there, and you shall meet my friends.

SEEMA: How wonderful that will be!

STEPHEN: Won't it, though?

SEEMA: (*In happy excitement*) Stephen, I am going to be a wonderful wife,—at the Mission they taught me so many things.

STEPHEN: Let's see now, what can you do?

SEEMA: I can cook and sew, and I have been reading. Oh, while you have been away I have been studying and reading so that you should be proud of me.

STEPHEN: (*Gallantly*) I have always been proud of you, Seema. How I used to dream of you when I was away off there in America!

SEEMA: And I was always thinking of you.

STEPHEN: Do you know when I first fell in love with you?

SEEMA: No. When was it?

STEPHEN: When you were nine years old, and I was fifteen. You were standing against the sky on the top of the mountain. Your arms were full of those red wild flowers. (*Pointing to the bowl of flowers on the table*)

SEEMA: The Fountain's Blood? (*A shot is heard faintly off stage. Stephen hears it, and grows uneasy, but does not communicate his fear to Seema. Boghos reenters from R. U. E., goes to door apprehensively and listens. Then going to the cabinet, he takes from behind it a rusty old rifle and begins to examine the lock. Mother Armenia comes from R. and goes to window R. C. where she stands looking out. This action takes place during the following conversation.*) Then I shall always love that flower best of all the flowers that grow.

STEPHEN: And so shall I.

SEEMA: The planting will soon begin now.

STEPHEN: It should begin but—(*He stops to listen.*)

SEEMA: But what?

STEPHEN: There is no seed.

SEEMA: I had forgotten. The Turks have taken all our seed.

STEPHEN : And our fields must lie untilled while thousands starve.

Suddenly more shots are heard in the distance. Startled cries are heard from the young girls who have just left the house. The wedding party has been attacked on the way to the mission.

MOTHER ARMENIA : (*Crying out*) The Turks are at their work again !

Stephen and Seema spring to their feet. Boghos goes back to the door C., gun in hand. A red glare is seen in the distance through the window.

SEEMA : Mother Armenia, it is the dawn !

MOTHER ARMENIA : It is not the dawn. Armenian skies have been red too many times with that same light. I know it well. I have lived more years than you have. The Turks have fired the village.

SEEMA : May God protect us !

MOTHER ARMENIA : The Kurds have come down from the mountains. I can see their figures moving dark against the light. Oh, God, they are coming closer, closer, closer—

Boghos lifts his gun to his shoulder. Stephen instinctively moves toward Seema, who crouches in his arms. Mother Armenia comes to C. and stands with face uplifted as if in silent prayer.

CURTAIN

Scene II

Place: Same as Scene I

Time: A Week Later

It is late afternoon, darkening to night as the action proceeds. The whole place is desolate-looking, as all the bright colored rugs, tapestries, etc., have been removed. The furniture remains about as it did in the first scene. The rocking-chair has been removed. Pieces of clothing are hanging about or thrown on the window seat. The door stands wide open, the windows also are open, with panes smashed. A shaft of late sunshine falls across the floor, emphasizing the desolation.

Mother Armenia is lighting the charcoal brazier. She goes to the cabinet, takes a small package of coffee, and pours water from an earthen pitcher into the pot. As she is doing this, there enters at door C. a thin, pale wraith of a girl, with wistful, staring eyes. She is followed by three others. Mother Armenia turns and sees them, and notices that they are watching her hungrily.

MOTHER ARMENIA: I have nothing for you. Mr. Ayer brought this bit of coffee from the Mission for Kushta.

FIRST GIRL: We would not want it.

MOTHER ARMENIA: I know you wouldn't. But I wanted you to know that we are not holding back anything.

SECOND GIRL: Did they take away everything?

MOTHER ARMENIA: You see what is left. (*Looking around the room*)

FIRST GIRL: Our house is empty, too. They took all the food we had.

MOTHER ARMENIA: You were lucky to escape, yourselves.

SECOND GIRL: We hid in the clump of bushes near our house, and lay there all night, our hearts beating with fear.

FIRST GIRL: Has there been any news of Seema?

MOTHER ARMENIA: Not a word.

FIRST GIRL: And Boghos Keuleyan, has he not come yet?

MOTHER ARMENIA: No, he will never come again.

FIRST GIRL: Oh!

MOTHER ARMENIA: He tried to defend her, and they killed him.

FIRST GIRL: And Stephen?

MOTHER ARMENIA: They stunned him and left him for dead, but he is better now.

FIRST GIRL: How is little Kushta?

MOTHER ARMENIA: She is very weak. This coffee has kept her alive. Mr. Ayer brought it himself from the mission. But even there they have very little of anything left.

FIRST GIRL: Then they, too, may starve?

MOTHER ARMENIA: Unless help comes.

FIRST GIRL: If help would only come!

MOTHER ARMENIA: How long is it since you have eaten?

FIRST GIRL: It is now four days; but it is weeks since we have eaten enough.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Poor children!

FIRST GIRL: I don't feel so hungry now, only I can't walk fast any more.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Where would you walk?

FIRST GIRL: (*Hopelessly*) I don't know. I think if we keep walking, walking,—somewhere we might find food.

They leave the door. As they do so, Margos enters. He is paler, and shows the effects of the suffering they have all been through.

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Taking a cup from the shelf, and pouring coffee into it*) Is there any news?

MARGOS: Mustapha Kemal's men are everywhere. More Kurds are coming down from the mountains.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Any news from the mission?

MARGOS: Manoog heard they were now cut off from all help.

MOTHER ARMENIA: They have dared to attack the Americans?

MARGOS: They have taken one of their teachers as hostage.

MOTHER ARMENIA: I remember the other day at Urfa, when Corinna Shattuck—that great American woman—faced a mob of them and made them cower by the force of her courage.

MARGOS: That was many years ago.

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Vacantly*) Was it? It was then that my boy was killed. I heard shooting a while ago; what was it, do you know?

MARGOS: Mustapha Kemal's men tried to force our people to raise the Turkish flag.

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Coming forward swiftly*) Did they yield?

MARGOS: Of course not.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Then they were massacred?

MARGOS: No, they managed to get some guns from the French garrison and they fought.

MOTHER ARMENIA: How long can they hold out?

MARGOS: They have already had to give up. Ali, Mustapha's captain, brought up reinforcements, and our men had to give in, but they did not fly the Turkish flag.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Ali? He is here now? I know who he is. It was he who took Seema. I saw the struggle from the window. What is to become of us!

MARGOS: If they can get a message through from the American Mission—. But all the Americans are known; they would have to have some one who could get by the Nationalist guards.

MOTHER ARMENIA: I am afraid there isn't much hope of that.

MARGOS: Mr. Ayer is trying to get a message to General Gaureaud through the Near East Relief at Aleppo.

MOTHER ARMENIA: What can they do? With Kemal's men all around us—

MARGOS: They could send some French battalions from Killis.

MOTHER ARMENIA: I have little hope. There is no one could get by the guards—

MARGOS: It is getting more dangerous for Christians every hour.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Mr. Ayer said there was food from America at Beirut.

MARGOS: And with the French troops to protect it on the way here it would soon be distributed from the mission.

A low moan is heard from room R.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Then help may be here soon?

MARGOS: It will not be easy to get the message through. Kemal's men are watching everywhere.

Stephen enters from L.

STEPHEN: How is Kushta? (*Seeing Margos*) Oh, how are you, Margos?

MARGOS: All right.

STEPHEN: (*To Mother Armenia*) How is Kushta?

MOTHER ARMENIA: She is growing weaker. But if food comes, we may save her.

STEPHEN: Poor little Kushta! (*To Margos*) Did you find out anything?

MARGOS: Yes, I have some good news.

STEPHEN: (*Eagerly*) She is alive?

MARGOS: Yes.

STEPHEN: And—is—is she safe?

MARGOS: Yes.

STEPHEN: Thank God!

MOTHER ARMENIA: Thank God! (*Goes to window R.*)

STEPHEN : Tell me what you have heard.

MARGOS : On the night of the attack, when you were lying unconscious, Ali, one of Mustapha Kemal's captains, took her—

MOTHER ARMENIA : I saw him—

STEPHEN : Go on!

MARGOS : She was struggling.

STEPHEN : (*Shudderingly*) Oh—o—oh!

MARGOS : It was in trying to save her that your father was killed.

STEPHEN : I know—I heard him call—I could not stir—I could not answer—I don't remember anything after that. (*Sits down on divan L.*)

MARGOS : Ali gave her over to a dervish that was somewhere near, telling him to take her to a house up in the mountains and keep her there till he came.

STEPHEN : (*Bitterly*) And this is the good news you have brought me?

MARGOS : No, there is more.

STEPHEN : (*Impatiently and eagerly*) What is it? Go on!

MARGOS : She has escaped—

STEPHEN : (*Springing up*) How do you know that?

MARGOS : She has been seen in the village.

STEPHEN : (*Tensely*) Are you sure? Who saw her?

MARGOS : Manoog. She motioned to him not to appear to recognize her.

STEPHEN : Then she is somewhere in the village now, trying to make her way back home!

MARGOS : That is it.

STEPHEN : Then I'll go and search for her.

MARGOS : No, Kemal's men are on the watch for her, and if she didn't want to be seen with Manoog it would be doubly dangerous to be seen with you. They are watching for you and would shoot you. (*He goes out.*)

STEPHEN : It would be better if she were dead!

Kushta has entered weakly from stage R. and has listened to the last part of Stephen's speech.

KUSHTA : Stephen!

STEPHEN : (*Looking up and going to her in greeting*) Yes, Kushta.

KUSHTA : Pray that God will bring her back.

STEPHEN : I can't pray—any more, Kushta.

KUSHTA : Do you think God would hear my prayer?

STEPHEN : I don't know. Sometimes I think—

KUSHTA: You think what?

STEPHEN: That there is no God.

Outside on the street children are heard crying.

CHILDREN: We are hungry! We are hungry!

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Leaving window R. W. and coming to Center, a peculiar, insane look in her eyes*) Listen! (*The children repeat the cry.*) Ha, ha! There is a God—but he has gone mad, raving mad—and he is whirling us all around in this mad, mad dance! Armenia is the cradle of the human race. We are right at the source—and here—we feel it most.

KUSHTA: Oh, Mother Armenia, please, please don't speak like that.

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Wildly*) Through centuries of oppression, Armenia has held the light of faith for all the world—and now those prosperous Christian nations—they leave us to struggle on—in the dark—alone with the Turk. (*Turns toward window R. W.*)

STEPHEN: (*Alarmed at this outbreak*) Mother Armenia, those are wild words.

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Facing him*) And yours were wild words too.

STEPHEN: (*With face and arms uplifted*) I know it. I didn't mean it. Perhaps I am going mad too.

MOTHER ARMENIA: No wonder. Millions of our people are crying for bread—and nobody hears, not even God himself.

More people are heard outside crying.

THE PEOPLE: We are hungry! We are hungry!

They are all silent for a moment as they listen to this terrible cry. Then Kushta takes Mother Armenia by the hand and leads her to the divan where Stephen is sitting, his head in his hands. Kneeling down beside them she prays.

KUSHTA: (*Praying*) I pray to God that Seema will come back to us safe. I pray to God for food. I pray for the soul of my dear Uncle Boghos, and for all my playmates who died last week. And if anything should happen to me, I pray to God to take care of my dolly. (*As she finishes the prayer both Stephen and Mother Armenia are weeping.*)

STEPHEN: Little Kushta, you are the proof of God's love. My faith grows strong again.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Oh, it is I who went mad. I know that God will not let us perish.

Margos returns to the door.

STEPHEN: What news?

MARGOS: I just met Manoog outside. He has made his way from the mission. Mr. Ayer wants you at once. He has news of Seema, but he needs your help.

MOTHER ARMENIA: But they'll kill you.

MARGOS: I can get him through safely. Some of them know me, and are not so badly disposed toward me.

STEPHEN: Come, let us go. You will be safe here, Mother Armenia—

MOTHER ARMENIA: We are as safe here as anywhere.

KUSHTA: I am not afraid.

STEPHEN: I will try to bring some food. If Seema should return before I get back do what you can for her, Mother Armenia.

MOTHER ARMENIA: I will. Stephen, be careful not to anger any of them; they would run you through with their bayonets.

STEPHEN: Don't worry. We'll get through all right.

MOTHER ARMENIA: God protect you!

Kushta sits C. weakly rocking back and forth and crooning to her doll. She has unconsciously taken up the tune of "Savage Sea Make Answer." Stephen and Margos exeunt.

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Turning to Kushta*) That's a sad song for a child to be singing.

KUSHTA: I have heard you sing it often. It is always in my ears.

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Going back to the charcoal burner, and pouring more coffee into the cup*) Here, child, take this. It will give you a little strength. (*While she has been at the brazier, Kushta has stopped crooning, and is lying on the floor. She does not answer.*) Kushta! Kushta! She is dead! (*The child moans and the doll drops from her hand. Mother Armenia utters a cry. The cry attracts another group of half-starved passers-by who have just come to the door.*)

FIRST GIRL: What is it, Mother Armenia?

MOTHER ARMENIA: She is gone—my little Kushta! (*Mother Armenia begins to weep.*)

SECOND GIRL: Why do you weep?

MOTHER ARMENIA: Have I not cause to weep?

FIRST GIRL: Oh, no. You have cause to rejoice. She can suffer no more but we—we may live for days, (*Puts her hands to her throat*) with no hope of food! There is no food in Armenia.

SECOND GIRL: When will she be buried?

MOTHER ARMENIA: We will bury her ourselves in the garden when Stephen returns.

FIRST GIRL: Can we help you?

MOTHER ARMENIA: Yes, I will keep her in my room with me to-night. (*The girls come in. As they stand looking at Kushta, before lifting her, Mother Armenia speaks.*) You are gone in your springtime, my little Kushta. No lad will ever come across the fields to court you. You will never know earthly joy or sorrow now. (*The young girls stand by, weeping silently.*) Oh, almighty God, in your infinite mercy, look down this day on the suffering of Armenia! We offer up to you the centuries of persecution we have suffered for the sake of the truth as taught by our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. (*They help Mother Armenia to lift the body of Kushta and carry it off R. E. They return and pass out back center. Mother Armenia comes out, and picks up Kushta's doll. As she does so, steps are heard coming from L.*) Little Kushta, you are gone, and there is one less mouth to feed in Armenia. (*The steps sound closer*) Is that you, Stephen? (*Voices are now heard outside, and there enter three Turkish soldiers. It has been growing dark, and she lights the lamp on table R. C.*) What do you want in my house?

ALI: (*Who is the captain*) We want shelter. It is beginning to rain.

MOTHER ARMENIA: You were not invited here.

The soldiers laugh.

ALI: That is true. But we invited ourselves.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Yes, just as long ago your murderous tribes invited themselves into our country and took our land away from us.

ALI: Oh, that was long ago, as you say. The land is ours now, and Armenians—well, they're just cattle that still resist the yoke.

MOTHER ARMENIA: And will always do so!

ALI: You are foolish. You should not be so unreasonable.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Is it nothing to ask a people to give up their country and their faith?

ALI: What good has your faith done you? Why do you cling to it?

MOTHER ARMENIA: For what it teaches. And we will cling to it while there is an Armenian living.

ALI: That will not be much longer.

MOTHER ARMENIA: Our friends at the mission are working for us and help is near at hand. (*The soldiers laugh.*) Why do you laugh?

ALI: Your friends at the mission are now cut off from all the world. Mustapha Kemal has brought up reinforcements, and your people are glad enough to remain quiet. No one but a Mohammedan may walk the streets in safety now.

MOTHER ARMENIA: God protect us!

ALI: Your God has forgotten you. (*The soldiers laugh.*) We are wasting good time that should be spent in sleep. You must find shelter elsewhere. Be off.

MOTHER ARMENIA: (*Pointing to the room R.*) There is a dead child lying there. May we not even bury our dead?

ALI: You can come back to-morrow, but we must have the place to-night. My men must have rest. We will not bother her. (*Without another word, Mother Armenia, brokenly and with bowed head, walks out of the door Center.*)

A SOLDIER: I suppose it's a shame to treat them like this.

ANOTHER SOLDIER: Then why are they so stubborn? All they need to do is to join our faith, and we'll let them alone.

A soldier comes upon the cup of coffee that Kushta has left untasted. He drinks it. They search around the room for what bits of clothing they can find, and make pillows for themselves. They have found a piece of bread on the shelf, they toss it from one to the other, then undo their own outfits, and after eating, settle down to sleep. The action takes place during the following conversation.

A SOLDIER: I wish I were home in the mountains!

ANOTHER: And so do I!

ANOTHER: I am getting tired of the stench of dead Christians.

ANOTHER: It is good planting time. The fields should be ready for seeding.

ANOTHER: (*Laughing*) We've got all the seed there is in the country.

ANOTHER: If only the country were rid of all Christians!

ANOTHER: Oh, then we'd have no more sport. Killing Christians is good sport.

They drop off to sleep. One has turned the lamp low. A soft knock is heard on the door.

SEEMA: (*Outside*) Stephen! Stephen! (*The knock is repeated.*) Father Boghos! Is there no one at home? (*The door opens softly and Seema enters*) Kushta! Oh little Kushta! (*She moves to the table on which the lamp is resting, and turns up the light. As she does so, she turns and sees the sleeping soldiers all around. Realizing her danger, she starts to tip-toe softly to the door. Ali has been watching her all the while, and as she reaches the door, she finds herself faced by him and his relentless gaze.*) Ali! May God protect me!

ALI: So you did not like it at my home in the mountains?

SEEMA: Let me pass.

ALI: Oh no. Why didn't you wait till I returned?

SEEMA: Let me pass, I say.

ALI: Do not be so defiant.

SEEMA: Please!

ALI: You are safer here with me, than in the street.

SEEMA: I can reach the American Mission. There I will be still safer.

ALI: How did you reach here unmolested? Our men are everywhere.

SEEMA: I ran swiftly and was not noticed.

ALI: You are too beautiful to pass unnoticed. Some one has helped you escape. Who was it?

SEEMA: Please let me pass.

ALI: Tell me who helped you to escape!

SEEMA: I will not!

ALI: So there *was* some one?

SEEMA: Please let me go. I will be safe at the mission.

ALI: Your Christian friends are in danger themselves. The mission is surrounded. You are in my power. Nothing can save you now but—

SEEMA: But God! (*The Turkish soldiers laugh.*)

ALI: Your God does not pay much attention to you. (*Woosingly*) Profess the faith of Allah, and stay with me. I will be good to you.

SEEMA: Never!

ALI: Say but the word and you can go unhindered anywhere.

SEEMA: No!

ALI: (*Getting ugly*) Then, by Allah! I will bother no more with you. These men of mine may not give you such gentle treatment. (*He starts to go. Seema looks in terror into the faces of the leering soldiers.*) Now, let us see your Jesus Christ perform a miracle. (*There is a moment's silence as Seema stands, apparently helpless.*) Your Christian friends in America have failed to send help. Your Christian friends at the mission are cut off and cannot reach you. (*Voices are heard outside. Seema looks hopefully in that direction.*) You need not hope for anything. There is no Christian abroad to-day. None but a Mohammedan may walk the streets in safety now.

Three dervishes enter.

THE DERVISHES: Bread! Bread!

ALI: Be off with you! I won't be interrupted now.

A SOLDIER: Captain, these dervishes are holy men. Evil luck will befall you if you do not treat them with respect.

One of the dervishes is Nooril. Seema recognizes him, and her face lights up. Ali observes it.

ALI: So! You are the one who helped her to escape. You are very fond of Christians, it seems.

SECOND DERVISH: (*With quiet force*) You seem to be rather fond of Christians yourself, Captain.

ALI: Silence! (*To the soldiers*) Take her to my home. Here, you can be trusted.

Two soldiers go to lay hands on Seema. As they do so, two of the dervishes throw aside their ragged garments, and William and Stephen stand revealed.

SEEMA: Stephen!

STEPHEN: You have nothing to fear now.

The soldiers are dazed at first, and then continue to advance. William stops them.

WILLIAM: Not so fast, my friends. These good people are under the protection of the American flag.

ALI: You don't dare let it wave. Mustapha Kemal's men have taken the town.

WILLIAM: Oh, yes, we dare. Listen! They are singing at the mission.

In the distance can be heard voices singing "The Star Spangled Banner."

ALI: Our men will soon silence that.

WILLIAM: You are too sanguine.

ALI: Why do you say that?

WILLIAM: The French troops have reached Urfa, and will be here in a little while.

ALI: You got a message through?

WILLIAM: Of course. And we will soon be able to get food through.

ALI: (*Looking angrily at Nooril*) Was it he who helped you?

WILLIAM: (*Going to him protectingly*) It was.

ALI: (*To Nooril*) You helped these Christian dogs?

NOORIL: (*Proudly*) I helped these Christian men!

ALI: Why did you do it?

NOORIL: Because they fed me when I was hungry.

ALI: And you forsook the ancient faith of Allah because they filled your stomach!

NOORIL: No, that was not the *only* reason. I am beginning to see the truth.

ALI: What do you call the truth?

NOORIL: I came to their door with hate, they met me with love. I was wounded, and they dressed my wounds. I was hungry and they fed me.

ALI: Disgusting!

NOORIL: But above all, it was because I went to their door hating them, and they met me with love.

ALI: And this girl. It was you who helped her to escape?

NOORIL: Yes.

ALI: (*In disgust*) And I put her in your care!

WILLIAM: It was God that put her in his care.

ALI: There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet!

WILLIAM: I am not going to discuss religion with you, my friend. I am merely going to ask you to judge a faith when it is put to test. (*Ali glares angrily at the dervish, who crouches close to William.*) You are, I believe, an educated Turk?

ALI: I am.

WILLIAM: Then I shall try to appeal to your reason. This man we have won to our faith because we met him with love when he came to us with hate. This young girl you would win to *your* faith by torturing her. What have you to say?

ALI: (*Fanatically*) There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet!

THE PEOPLE: (*As they pass in the dark street below*) We are hungry! We are hungry!

There is silence. Mother Armenia enters C. door. The demented look has returned to her eye.

MOTHER ARMENIA: I cannot find my boy. He left me in the morning laughing. They took our men from the villages. They had no guns to defend themselves with, and they tied them together arm to arm and marched them step by step to the bank of the Euphrates. They shoved them in—all struggling together—and my boy was among them—

Seema goes to Mother Armenia and stands with her arm around her.

WILLIAM: That is part of the history.

More people pass outside crying.

THE PEOPLE: We are hungry! We are hungry!

WILLIAM: And this is what you do to a people in the name of your prophet!

ALI: Well, what have your *Christian* nations done for them?

WILLIAM: (*Sadly*) Some are doing little enough.—But some of us are doing—ALL WE CAN. (*With his hand pressed to his side, he slowly sinks down panting. Stephen comes quickly and supports him.*)

STEPHEN: (*Anxiously*) What's the matter, William?

WILLIAM: (*Breathing with difficulty*) It is the old wound, Steve. These—have been—strenuous days—

STEPHEN: You are killing yourself with overwork! (*To Ali*) Will you not relieve us of your presence now? You are no longer in command. (*The soldiers do not move.*) We might make it unpleasant for you if you remain.

ALI: (*Seeing that Stephen is sure of his ground*) We will go. (*Ali and his soldiers exeunt doggedly. The women come anxiously forward to William's side.*)

WILLIAM: (*Looking around vaguely*) Where is Kushta?—Has she had any bread to-day?

MOTHER ARMENIA: Kushta will never ask for bread again.

STEPHEN: (*Starting*) Kushta—?

SEEMA: (*Stonily*) So little Kushta has gone too! (*Stephen bows his head in one hand while he still supports William with the other arm.*)

WILLIAM: (*Looking from one to another and at last comprehending*) Dead?—Kushta dead? (*Silently Mother Armenia nods. He rises with effort from the divan.*) I must go!

STEPHEN: You cannot. You must rest!

WILLIAM: Rest? I cannot rest! (*Speaking with new firmness, and passion dominating his bodily weakness.*) I must go—back to America to tell them about Kushta, and the thousands of others who are starving here. My country will not fail me!

Very softly the orchestra takes up the strain of "America." More people are heard in the street below.

THE PEOPLE: We are hungry! We are hungry!

As the curtain descends the cry of "We are hungry," "We are hungry," is still heard mingling with the far-away sound of people at the mission singing "My country 'tis of thee."

CURTAIN

MY SWEETHEART SLIM LIKE A PLANE-TREE

Im Chinari Yaru

Arranged by Komitas Wardapet

mp Allegretto con amabilita.

The sun rose high with joy, . . . My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree! I

mp

This system contains the first line of music. It features a vocal line on a single treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/8. The tempo and mood are indicated as *mp Allegretto con amabilita.* The lyrics are: "The sun rose high with joy, . . . My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree! I". The piano part includes a *mp* dynamic marking.

married the one I loved, . . . My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree! Let me

This system contains the second line of music. It features a vocal line on a single treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/8. The lyrics are: "married the one I loved, . . . My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree! Let me".

die for your life, dear sweet - heart, My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree! Grow

This system contains the third line of music. It features a vocal line on a single treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/8. The lyrics are: "die for your life, dear sweet - heart, My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree! Grow".

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up and be al - ways green, My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree!

Chorus.

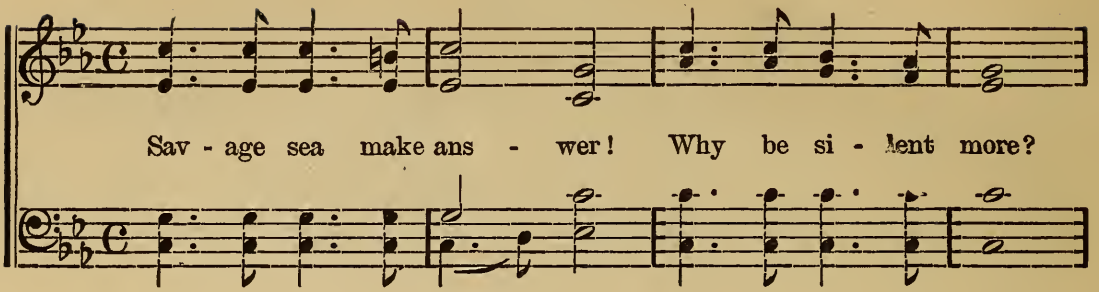
My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree; My sweet-heart, slim like a plain - tree; My
 My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree; Slim like a plane - tree;
 My sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree; Slim . . . like a plane - tree; My
 My sweet - heart; My sweet - heart;

sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree! Well be - loved is my sweet - heart.
 My sweet - heart, Well be - loved is my sweet - heart.
 sweet-heart, slim like a plane - tree! Well be - loved is my sweet - heart.
 My sweet - heart! Well be - loved is my sweet - heart.

SAVAGE SEA MAKE ANSWER

Vana Dsovag

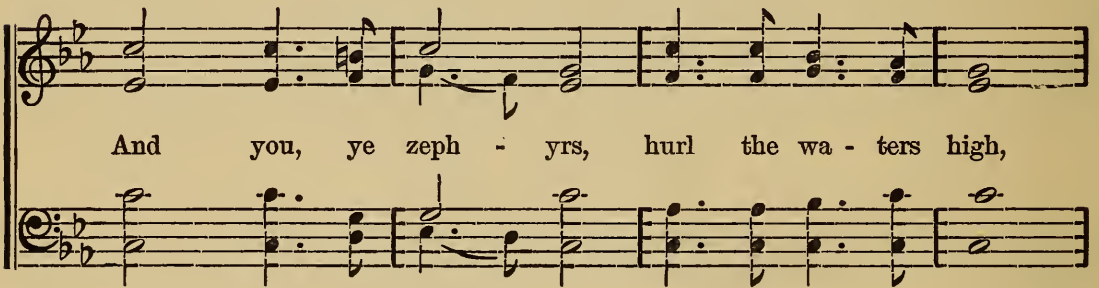
Arranged by K. H. Aiquoni



Sav - age sea make ans - wer! Why be si - lent more?



Wilt not la - ment..... with one whose heart is sore?

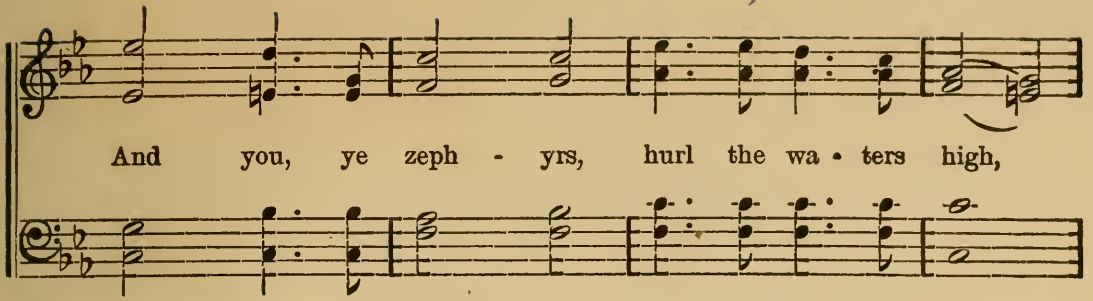


And you, ye zeph - yrs, hurl the wa - ters high,



That.... I may feed them..... from a mourn - er's eye,

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And you, ye zeph - yrs, hurl the wa - ters high,



That... I may feed them from a mourn-er's eye!

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